

STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR THAD COCHRAN

September 27, 2013

Mr. President, I have opposed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act since it was forced through a Democratic-controlled Congress without the support of a single Republican in the House or Senate. I have voted to dismantle, defund, delay and reverse this law every chance I've been given. I will continue to take every possible action that might be effective in achieving its repeal.

As the negative impacts of this law become more apparent, people in my state of Mississippi have expressed a great deal of concern about how the law is affecting their families and businesses. They have articulated a pronounced unease about the costs of the law, and the extent to which the federal government will be involved in their personal healthcare decisions. I share their concerns.

My constituents recognize that the law is not working as promised. The Administration has delayed implementation of several of the law's key provisions. These special exceptions and exemptions are clear indications that the law is overly complex and ill-conceived.

As their representatives in Washington, we should respect the fact that the majority of Americans don't support this law, otherwise known as "Obamacare."

Mr. President, I dislike Obamacare as much as any of my colleagues. I strongly support the provisions in this appropriations bill that would bring implementation of Obamacare to a halt. However, to now vote to stop that very bill in its tracks makes little sense to me.

Shutting down the government to show how much we dislike the law won't stop Obamacare. The mandates in Obamacare don't go away if we don't fund the rest of the government. Most of the funding to implement Obamacare does not depend on us passing this appropriations bill; that funding is mandatory spending that has already been provided in law.

To stop Obamacare we have to enact a law that does just that. That requires a sufficient number of votes in the House and in the Senate, and it requires either the President's signature or a veto-proof majority in both houses. I suspect that we don't currently have the votes in the Senate to pass such legislation. But more importantly, I don't think voting to stall the very language that we opponents of Obamacare wish to see enacted—and risking a government shutdown as a result—will get us closer to the goal of stopping Obamacare.

I think a government shutdown might have the opposite effect. It will shift public and media focus away from the costly and damaging aspects of the health care law just as it is being fully implemented, and it will detract from the ability of the American people to clearly express their discontent about the law. It is only such expressions of discontent that will either change the minds of a sufficient number of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, or send new representation to Washington to aid in the fight against Obamacare.

Mr. President, it is shortsighted for those of us who oppose the Obamacare law to take actions that won't reverse the law's potentially devastating impacts, and will likely damage our prospects of achieving that goal in the future. The stakes are too high.

I will continue to fight for our shared end goal—to fully repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.